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The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G. H. Thomas

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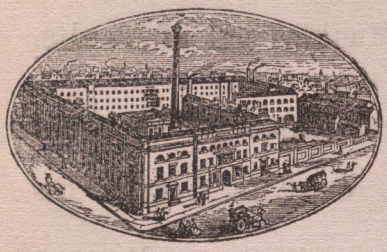

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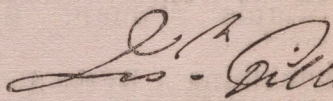

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MRS PROUDIE'S EMISSARY.

CHAPTER LXII.

MR. CRAWLEY'S LETTER TO THE DEAN.

MR. CRAWLEY, when he got home after his walk to Silverbridge, denied that he was at all tired. "The man at Silverbridge, whom I went to see administered refreshment to me;—nay, he administered it with salutary violence," he said, affecting even to laugh. "And I am bound to speak well of him on behalf of mercies over and beyond that exhibited by the persistent tender of some wine. That I should find him judicious I had expected. What little I have known of him taught me so to think of him. But I found with him also a softness of heart for which I had not looked."

"And you will not give up the living, Josiah?"

"Most certainly I will. A duty, when it is clear before a man, should never be made less so by any tenderness in others." He was still thinking of Giles Hoggett. "It's dogged as does it." The poor woman could not answer him. She knew well that it was vain to argue with him. She could only hope that in the event of his being acquitted at the trial, the dean, whose friendship she did not doubt, might re-endow him with the small benefice which was their only source of bread.

On the following morning there came by post a short note from Dr. Tempest. "My dear Mr. Crawley," the note ran, "I implore you, if there be yet time, to do nothing rashly. And even although you should have written to the bishop or to the dean, your letters need have no effect, if you will allow me to make them inoperative. Permit me to say that I am a man much older than you, and one who has

mixed much both with clergymen and with the world at large. I tell you with absolute confidence, that it is not your duty in your present position to give up your living. Should your conduct ever be called in question on this matter you will be at perfect liberty to say that you were guided by my advice. You should take no step till after the trial. Then, if the verdict be against you, you should submit to the bishop's judgment. If the verdict be in your favour, the bishop's interference will be over.

"And you must remember that if it is not your duty as a clergyman to give up your living, you can have no right, seeing that you have a wife and family, to throw it away as an indulgence to your pride. Consult any other friend you please;—Mr. Robarts, or the dean himself. I am quite sure that any friend who knows as many of the circumstances as I know will advise you to hold the living, at any rate till after the trial. You can refer any such friend to me.

"Believe me to be, yours very truly,

"MORTIMER TEMPEST."

Mr. Crawley walked about again with this letter in his pocket, but on this occasion he did not go in the direction of Hoggle End. From Hoggle End he could hardly hope to pick up further lessons of wisdom. What could any Giles Hoggett say to him beyond what he had said to him already? If he were to read the doctor's letter to Hoggett, and to succeed in making Hoggett understand it all, Hoggett could only caution him to be dogged. But it seemed to him that Hoggett and his new friend at Silverbridge did not agree in their doctrines, and it might be well that he should endeavour to find out which of them had most of justice on his side. He was quite sure that Hoggett would advise him to adhere to his project of giving up the living,—if only Hoggett could be made to understand the circumstances.

He had written, but had not as yet sent away his letter to the dean. His letter to the bishop would be but a note, and he had postponed the writing of that till the other should be copied and made complete.

He had sat up late into the night composing and altering his letter to his old friend, and now that the composition was finished he was loth to throw it away. Early in this morning, before the postman had brought to him Dr. Tempest's urgent remonstrance, he had shown to his wife the draught of his letter to the dean. "I cannot say that it is not true," she had said.

"It is certainly true."

"But I wish, dear, you would not send it. Why should you take any step till the trial be over?"

"I shall assuredly send it," he had replied. "If you will peruse it again, you will see that the epistle would be futile were it kept till I shall have been proved to be a thief."

"Oh, Josiah, such words kill me."

"They are not pleasant, but it will be well that you should become used to them. As for the letter, I have taken some trouble to express myself with perspicuity, and I trust that I may have succeeded." At that time Hoggett was altogether in the ascendant; but now, as he started on his walk, his mind was somewhat perturbed by the contrary advice of one, who after all, might be as wise as Hoggett. There would be nothing dogged in the conduct recommended to him by Dr. Tempest. Were he to follow the doctor's advice, he would be trimming his sails, so as to catch any slant of a breeze that might be favourable to him. There could be no doggedness in a character that would submit to such trimming.

The postman came to Hogglestock but once in a day, so that he could not despatch his letter till the next morning,—unless, indeed, he chose to send it a distance of four miles to the nearest post-office. As there was nothing to justify this, there was another night for the copying of his letter,—should he at last determine to send it. He had declared to Dr. Tempest that he would send it. He had sworn to his wife that it should go. He had taken much trouble with it. He believed in Hoggett. But, nevertheless, this incumbency of Hogglestock was his all in the world. It might be that he could still hold it, and have bread at least for his wife to eat. Dr. Tempest had told him that he would be probably acquitted. Dr. Tempest knew as much of all the circumstances as did he himself, and had told him that he was not guilty. After all Dr. Tempest knew more about it than Hoggett knew.

If he resigned the living, what would become of him,—of him,—of him and of his wife? Whither would they first go when they turned their back upon the door inside which there had at any rate been shelter for them for many years? He calculated everything that he had, and found that at the end of April, even when he should have received his rent-charge, there would not be five pounds in hand among them. As for his furniture, he still owed enough to make it impossible that he should get anything out of that. And these thoughts all had reference to his position if he should be acquitted. What would become of his wife if he should be convicted? And as for himself, whither should he go when he came out of prison?

He had completely realized the idea that Hoggett's counsel was opposed to that given to him by Dr. Tempest; but then it might certainly be the case that Hoggett had not known all the facts. A man should, no doubt, be dogged when the evils of life are insuperable; but need he be so when the evils can be overcome? Would not Hoggett himself undergo any treatment which he believed to be specific for rheumatism? Yes; Hoggett would undergo any treatment that was not in itself opposed to his duty. The best treatment for rheumatism might be to stay away from the brick-field on a rainy day; but if so, there would be no money to keep the pot boiling, and Hoggett would certainly go to the brick-field, rheumatism and all, as long as his limbs would carry him there. Yes; he would send his letter. It was his duty, and he would do it. Men looked askance at him, and pointed at him as a thief. He would send the letter, in spite of Dr. Tempest. Let justice be done, though the heaven may fall.

He had heard of Lady Lufton's offer to his wife. The offers of the Lady Luftons of the world had been sorely distressing to his spirit, since it had first come to pass that such offers had reached him in consequence of his poverty. But now there was something almost of relief to him in the thought that the Lady Luftons would, after some fashion, save his wife and children from starvation;—would save his wife from the poorhouse, and enable his children to have a start in the world. For one of his children a brilliant marriage might be provided,—if only he himself were out of the way. How could he take himself out of the way? It had been whispered to him that he might be imprisoned for two months,—or for two years. Would it not be a grand thing if the judge would condemn him to be imprisoned for life? Was there ever a man whose existence was so purposeless, so useless, so deleterious, as his own? And yet he knew Hebrew well, whereas the dean knew but very little Hebrew. He could make Greek iambics, and doubted whether the bishop knew the difference between an iambus and a trochee. He could disport himself with trigonometry, feeling confident that Dr. Tempest had forgotten his way over the asses' bridge. He knew "Lycidas" by heart; and as for Thumble, he felt quite sure that Thumble was incompetent of understanding a single allusion in that divine poem. Nevertheless, though all this wealth of acquirement was his, it would be better for himself, better for those who belonged to him, better for the world at large, that he should be put an end to. A sentence of penal servitude for life, without any trial, would be of all things the most desirable. Then there would be ample room for the practice of that virtue which Hoggett had taught him.

When he returned home the Hoggethan doctrine prevailed, and he prepared to copy his letter. But before he commenced his task, he sat down with his youngest daughter, and read,—or made her read to him, —a passage out of a Greek poem, in which are described the troubles and agonies of a blind giant. No giant would have been more powerful, —only that he was blind, and could not see to avenge himself on those who had injured him. "The same story is always coming up," he said, stopping the girl in her reading. "We have it in various versions, because it is so true to life.

> Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
> Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves.

It is the same story. Great power reduced to impotence, great glory to misery, by the hand of Fate,—Necessity, as the Greeks called her; the goddess that will not be shunned! At the mill with slaves! People, when they read it, do not appreciate the horror of the picture. Go on, my dear. It may be a question whether Polyphemus had mind enough to suffer; but, from the description of his power, I should think that he had. 'At the mill with slaves!' Can any picture be more dreadful than that? Go on, my dear. Of course you remember Milton's Samson Agonistes. Agonistes indeed!" His wife was sitting stitching at the other side of the room; but she heard his words,—heard and understood them; and before Jane could again get herself into the swing of the Greek verse, she was over at her husband's side, with her arms round his neck. "My love!" she said. "My love!"

He turned to her, and smiled as he spoke to her. "These are old thoughts with me. Polyphemus and Belisarius, and Samson and Milton, have always been pets of mine. The mind of the strong blind creature must be so sensible of the injury that has been done to him! The impotency, combined with his strength, or rather the impotency with the memory of former strength and former aspirations, is so essentially tragic!"

She looked into his eyes as he spoke, and there was something of the flash of old days, when the world was young to them, and when he would tell her of his hopes, and repeat to her long passages of poetry, and would criticize for her advantage the works of old writers. "Thank God," she said, "that you are not blind. It may yet be all right with you."

"Yes,—it may be," he said.

"And you shall not be at the mill with slaves."

"Or, at any rate, not eyeless in Gaza, if the Lord is good to me.

Come, Jane, we will go on." Then he took up the passage himself, and read it on with clear, sonorous voice, every now and then explaining some passage or expressing his own ideas upon it, as though he were really happy with his poetry.

It was late in the evening before he got out his small stock of best letter-paper, and sat down to work at his letter. He first addressed himself to the bishop; and what he wrote to the bishop was as follows:—

"My Lord Bishop, "Hogglestock Parsonage, April 11th, 186—.

"I have been in communication with Dr. Tempest, of Silverbridge, from whom I have learned that your lordship has been pleased to appoint a commission of inquiry,—of which commission he is the chairman,—with reference to the proceedings which it may be necessary that you should take, as bishop of this diocese, after my forthcoming trial at the approaching Barchester assizes. My lord, I think it right to inform you, partly with a view to the comfort of the gentlemen named on that commission, and partly with the purport of giving you that information which I think that a bishop should possess in regard to the clerical affairs of his own diocese, that I have by this post resigned my preferment at Hogglestock into the hands of the Dean of Barchester, by whom it was given to me. In these circumstances, it will, I suppose, be unnecessary for you to continue the commission which you have set in force; but as to that, your lordship will, of course, be the only judge.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord Bishop,

"Your most obedient and very humble servant,

"Josiah Crawley,

"Perpetual Curate of Hogglestock

"The Right Reverend

"The Bishop of Barchester,

"&c. &c. &c.

"The Palace, Barchester."

But the letter which was of real importance,—which was intended to say something,—was that to the dean, and that also shall be given to the reader. Mr. Crawley had been for a while in doubt how he should address his old friend in commencing this letter, understanding that its tone throughout must, in a great degree, be made conformable with its first words. He would fain, in his pride, have begun "Sir." The question was between that and "My dear Arabin." It had once

between them always been "Dear Frank" and "Dear Joe;" but the occasions for "Dear Frank" and "Dear Joe" between them had long been past. Crawley would have been very angry had he now been called Joe by the dean, and would have bitten his tongue out before he would have called the dean Frank. His better nature, however, now prevailed, and he began his letter, and completed it as follows:—

"My dear Arabin,

"Circumstances, of which you have probably heard something, compel me to write to you, as I fear, at some length. I am sorry that the trouble of such a letter should be forced upon you during your holidays;"—Mr. Crawley, as he wrote this, did not forget to remind himself that he never had any holidays;—"but I think you will admit, if you will bear with me to the end, that I have no alternative.

"I have been accused of stealing a cheque for twenty pounds, which cheque was drawn by my Lord Lufton on his London bankers, and was lost out of his pocket by Mr. Soames, his lordship's agent, and was so lost, as Mr. Soames states,—not with an absolute assertion,—during a visit which he made to my parsonage here at Hogglestock. Of the fact that I paid the cheque to a tradesman in Silverbridge there is no doubt. When questioned about it, I first gave an answer which was so manifestly incorrect that it has seemed odd to me that I should not have had credit for a mistake from those who must have seen that detection was so evident. The blunder was undoubtedly stupid, and it now bears heavy on me. I then, as I have learned, made another error,—of which I am aware that you have been informed. I said that the cheque had come to me from you, and in saying so, I thought that it had formed a portion of that alms which your open-handed benevolence bestowed upon me when I attended on you, not long before your departure, in your library. I have striven to remember the facts. It may be,—nay, it probably is the case,—that such struggles to catch some accurate glimpse of bygone things do not trouble you. Your mind is, no doubt, clearer and stronger than mine, having been kept to its proper tune by greater and fitter work. With me, memory is all but gone, and the power of thinking is on the wane! I struggled to remember, and I thought that the cheque had been in the envelope which you handed to me,—and I said so. I have since learned, from tidings received, as I am told, direct from yourself, that I was as wrong in the second statement as I had been in the first. The double blunder has, of course, been very heavy on me.

"I was taken before the magistrates at Silverbridge, and was by them committed to stand my trial at the assizes to be holden in Barchester on the 28th of this month. Without doubt, the magistrates had no alternative but to commit me, and I am indebted to them that they have allowed me my present liberty upon bail. That my sufferings in all this should have been grievous, you will understand. But on that head I should not touch, were it not that I am bound to explain to you that my troubles in reference to this parish of Hogglestock, to which I was appointed by you, have not been the slightest of those sufferings. I felt at first, believing then that the world around me would think it unlikely that such a one as I had wilfully stolen a sum of money, that it was my duty to maintain myself in my church. I did so maintain myself against an attack made upon me by the bishop, who sent over to Hogglestock one Mr. Thumble, a gentleman doubtless in holy orders, though I know nothing and can learn nothing of the place of his cure, to dispossess me of my pulpit and to remove me from my ministrations among my people. To Mr. Thumble I turned a deaf ear, and would not let him so much as open his mouth inside the porch of my church. Up to this time I myself have read the services, and have preached to the people, and have continued, as best I could, my visits to the poor and my labours in the school, though I know,—no one knows as well,—how unfitted I am for such work by the grief which has fallen upon me.

"Then the bishop sent for me, and I thought it becoming on my part to go to him. I presented myself to his lordship at his palace, and was minded to be much governed in my conduct by what he might say to me, remembering that I am bound to respect the office, even though I may not approve the man; and I humbled myself before his lordship, waiting patiently for any directions which he in his discretion might think it proper to bestow on me. But there arose up between us that very pestilent woman, his wife,—to his dismay, seemingly, as much as to mine,—and she would let there be place for no speech but her own. If there be aught clear to me in ecclesiastical matters, it is this,—that no authority can be delegated to a female. The special laws of this and of some other countries do allow that women shall sit upon the temporal thrones of the earth, but on the lowest step of the throne of the Church no woman has been allowed to sit as bearing authority, the romantic tale of the woman Pope notwithstanding. Thereupon, I left the palace in wrath, feeling myself aggrieved that a woman should have attempted to dictate to me, and finding it hopeless to get a clear instruction from his lordship,—the woman taking up the word whenever

I put a question to my lord the bishop. Nothing, therefore, came of that interview but fruitless labour to myself, and anger, of which I have since been ashamed.

"Since that time I have continued in my parish,—working, not without zeal, though in truth, almost without hope,—and learning even from day to day that the opinions of men around me have declared me to be guilty of the crime imputed to me. And now the bishop has issued a commission as preparatory to proceeding against me under the Act for the punishment of clerical offences. In doing this, I cannot say that the bishop has been ill-advised, even though the advice may have come from that evil-tongued lady, his wife. And I hold that a woman may be called on for advice, with most salutary effect, in affairs as to which any show of female authority would be equally false and pernicious. With me it has ever been so, and I have had a counsellor by me as wise as she has been devoted." It must be noticed that in the draught copy of his letter which Mr. Crawley gave to his wife to read this last sentence was not inserted. Intending that she should read his letter, he omitted it till he made the fair copy. "Over this commission his lordship has appointed Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge to preside, and with him I have been in communication. I trust that the labours of the gentlemen of whom it is composed may be brought to a speedy close; and, having regard to their trouble, which in such a matter is, I fear, left without remuneration, I have informed Dr. Tempest that I should write this letter to you with the intent and assured purpose of resigning the perpetual curacy of Hogglestock into your hands.

"You will be good enough, therefore, to understand that I do so resign the living, and that I shall continue to administer the services of the church only till some clergyman, certified to me as coming from you or from the bishop, may present himself in the parish, and shall declare himself prepared to undertake the cure. Should it be so that Mr. Thumble be sent hither again, I will sit under him, endeavouring to catch improvement from his teaching, and striving to overcome the contempt which I felt for him when he before visited this parish. I annex beneath my signature a copy of the letter which I have written to the bishop on this subject.

"And now it behoves me, as the guardianship of the souls of those around me was placed in my hands by you, to explain to you as shortly as may be possible the reasons which have induced me to abandon my work. One or two whose judgment I do not discredit,—and I am allowed to name Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge as one,—have suggested to me that I should take no step myself till after my trial. They think

that I should have regard to the chance of the verdict, so that the preferment may still be mine should I be acquitted; and they say, that should I be acquitted, the bishop's action against me must of necessity cease. That they are right in these facts I do not doubt; but in giving such advice they look only to facts, having no regard to the conscience. I do not blame them. I should give such advice myself, knowing that a friend may give counsel as to outer things, but that a man must satisfy his inner conscience by his own perceptions of what is right and what is wrong.

"I find myself to be ill-spoken of, to be regarded with hard eyes by those around me, my people thinking that I have stolen this money. Two farmers in this parish have, as I am aware, expressed opinions that no jury could acquit me honestly, and neither of these men have appeared in my church since the expression of that opinion. I doubt whether they have gone to other churches; and if not they have been deterred from all public worship by my presence. If this be so, how can I with a clear conscience remain among these men? Shall I take from their hands wages for those administrations, which their deliberately formed opinions will not allow them to accept from my hands?" And yet, though he thus pleaded against himself, he knew that the two men of whom he was speaking were thick-headed dolts who were always tipsy on Saturday nights, and who came to church perhaps once in three weeks.

"Your kind heart will doubtless prompt you to tell me that no clergyman could be safe in his parish if he were to allow the opinion of chance parishioners to prevail against him; and you would probably lay down for my guidance that grand old doctrine, 'Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ.' Presuming that you may do so, I will acknowledge such guidance to be good. If my mind were clear in this matter, I would not budge an inch for any farmer,—no, nor for any bishop, further than he might by law compel me! But my mind is not clear. I do grow pale, and my hair stands on end with horror, as I confess to myself that I do not know whether I stole this money or no! Such is the fact. In all sincerity I tell you that I know not whether I be guilty or innocent. It may be that I picked up the cheque from the floor of my room, and afterwards took it out and used it, not knowing whence it had come to me. If it be so, I stole it, and am guilty before the laws of my country. If it be so, I am not fit to administer the Lord's sacraments to these people. When the cup was last in my hand and I was blessing them, I felt that I was not fit, and I almost dropped the chalice. That God will know my weakness and pardon me the perplexity of my mind,—that is between Him and His creature.

"As I read my letter over to myself I feel how weak are my words, and how inefficient to explain to you the exact position in which I stand; but they will suffice to convince you that I am assuredly purposed to resign this parish of Hogglestock, and that it is therefore incumbent on you, as patron of the living, to nominate my successor to the benefice. I have only further to ask your pardon for this long letter, and to thank you again for the many and great marks of friendship which you have conferred on me. Alas, could you have foreseen in those old days how barren of all good would have been the life of him you then esteemed, you might perhaps have escaped the disgrace of being called the friend of one whom no one now regards with esteem.

"Nevertheless, I may still say that I am,

"With all affection, yours truly,

"JOSIAH CRAWLEY."

The last paragraph of the letter was also added since his wife had read it. When he had first composed his letter, he had been somewhat proud of his words, thinking that he had clearly told his story. But when, sitting alone at his desk, he read it again, filling his mind as he went on with ideas which he would fain have expressed to his old friend, were it not that he feared to indulge himself with too many words, he began to tell himself that his story was anything but well told. There was no expression there of the Hoggethan doctrine. In answer to such a letter as that the dean might well say, "Think again of it. Try yet to save yourself. Never mind the two farmers, or Mr. Thumble, or the bishop. Stick to the ship while there is a plank above the water." Whereas it had been his desire to use words that should make the dean clearly understand that the thing was decided. He had failed,—as he had failed in everything throughout his life; but nevertheless the letter must go. Were he to begin again he would not do it better. So he added to what he had written a copy of his note to the bishop, and the letter was fastened and sent.

Mrs. Crawley might probably have been more instant in her efforts to stop the letter, had she not felt that it would not decide everything. In the first place it was not improbable that the letter might not reach the dean till after his return home,—and Mrs. Crawley had long since made up her mind that she would see the dean as soon as possible after his return. She had heard from Lady Lufton that it was not doubted in Barchester that he would be back at any rate before the judges came into the city. And then, in the next place, was it probable that the dean would act upon such a letter by filling up the vacancy,

even if he did get it? She trusted in the dean, and knew that he would help them, if any help were possible. Should the verdict go against her husband, then indeed it might be that no help would be possible. In such case she thought that the bishop with his commission might prevail. But she still believed that the verdict would be favourable,—if not with an assured belief, still with a hope that was sufficient to stand in lieu of a belief. No single man, let alone no twelve men, could think that her husband had intended to appropriate that money dishonestly. That he had taken it improperly,—without real possession,—she herself believed; but he had not taken it as a thief, and could not merit a thief's punishment.

After two days he got a reply from the bishop's chaplain, in which the chaplain expressed the bishop's commendation of Mr. Crawley's present conduct. "Mr. Thumble shall proceed from hence to Hogglestock on next Sunday," said the chaplain, "and shall relieve you for the present from the burden of your duties. As to the future status of the parish, it will perhaps be best that nothing shall be done till the dean returns,—or perhaps till the assizes shall be over. This is the bishop's opinion." It need hardly be explained that the promised visit of Mr. Thumble to Hogglestock was gall and wormwood to Mr. Crawley. He had told the dean that should Mr. Thumble come, he would endeavour to learn something even from him. But it may be doubted whether Mr. Crawley in his present mood could learn anything useful from Mr. Thumble. Giles Hoggett was a much more effective teacher.

"I will endure even that," he said to his wife, as she handed to him back the letter from the bishop's chaplain.

CHAPTER LXIII.

TWO VISITORS TO HOGGLESTOCK.

The cross-grainedness of men is so great that things will often be forced to go wrong, even when they have the strongest possible natural tendency of their own to go right. It was so now in these affairs between the archdeacon and his son. The original difficulty was solved by the good feeling of the young lady,—by that and by the real kindness of the archdeacon's nature. They had come to terms which were satisfactory to both of them, and those terms admitted of perfect reconciliation between the father and his son. Whether the major did marry the lady or whether he did not, his allowance was to be continued to him, the archdeacon being perfectly willing to trust himself in the matter to the pledge which he had received from Miss Crawley. All that he required from his son was simply this,—that he should pull down the bills advertising the sale of his effects. Was any desire ever more rational? The sale had been advertised for a day just one week in advance of the assizes, and the time must have been selected,—so thought the archdeacon,—with a malicious intention. Why, at any rate, should the things be sold before any one knew whether the father of the young lady was or was not to be regarded as a thief? And why should the things be sold at all, when the archdeacon had tacitly withdrawn his threats,—when he had given his son to understand that the allowance would still be paid quarterly with the customary archidiaconal regularity, and that no alteration was intended in those settlements under which the Plumstead foxes would, in the ripeness of time, become the property of the major himself. It was thus that the archdeacon looked at it, and as he did so, he thought that his son was the most cross-grained of men.

But the major had his own way of looking at the matter. He had, he flattered himself, dealt very fairly with his father. When he had first made up his mind to make Miss Crawley his wife, he had told his father of his intention. The archdeacon had declared that, if he did so, such and such results would follow,—results which, as was apparent to every one, would make it indispensable that the major should leave Cosby Lodge. The major had never complained. So he told himself. He had simply said to his father,—"I shall do as I have said. You

can do as you have said. Therefore, I shall prepare to leave Cosby Lodge." He had so prepared; and as a part of that preparation, the auctioneer's bills had been stuck up on the posts and walls. Then the archdeacon had gone to work surreptitiously with the lady,—the reader will understand that we are still following the workings of the major's mind,—and having succeeded in obtaining a pledge which he had been wrong to demand, came forward very graciously to withdraw his threats. He withdrew his threats because he had succeeded in his object by other means. The major knew nothing of the kiss that had been given, of the two tears that had trickled down his father's nose, of the generous epithets which the archdeacon had applied to Grace. He did not guess how nearly his father had yielded altogether beneath the pressure of Grace's charms,—how willing he was to yield altogether at the first decent opportunity. His father had obtained a pledge from Grace that she would not marry in certain circumstances,—as to which circumstances the major was strongly resolved that they should form no bar to his marriage,—and then came forward with his eager demand that the sale should be stopped! The major could not submit to so much indignity. He had resolved that his father should have nothing to do with his marriage one way or the other. He would not accept anything from his father on the understanding that his father had any such right. His father had asserted such right with threats, and he, the major, taking such threats as meaning something, had seen that he must leave Cosby Lodge. Let his father come forward, and say that they meant nothing, that he abandoned all right to any interference as to his son's marriage, and then the son—would dutifully consent to accept his father's bounty! They were both cross-grained, as Mrs. Grantly declared; but I think that the major was the most cross-grained of the two.

Something of the truth made its way into Henry Grantly's mind as he drove himself home from Barchester after seeing his grandfather. It was not that he began to think that his father was right, but that he almost perceived that it might be becoming in him to forgive some fault in his father. He had been implored to honour his father, and he was willing to do so, understanding that such honour must, to a certain degree, imply obedience,—if it could be done at no more than a moderate expense to his feelings. The threatened auctioneer was the cause of offence to his father, and he might see whether it would not be possible to have the sale postponed. There would, of course, be a pecuniary loss, and that in his diminished circumstances,—he would still talk to himself of his diminished circumstances,—might be inconvenient. But

so much he thought himself bound to endure on his father's behalf. At any rate, he would consult the auctioneer at Silverbridge.

But he would not make any pause in the measures which he had proposed to himself as likely to be conducive to his marriage. As for Grace's pledge, such pledges from young ladies never went for anything. It was out of the question that she should be sacrificed, even though her father had taken the money. And, moreover, the very gist of the major's generosity was to consist in his marrying her whether the father were guilty or innocent. He understood that perfectly, and understood also that it was his duty to make his purpose in this respect known to Grace's family. He determined, therefore, that he would go over to Hogglestock, and see Mr. Crawley before he saw the auctioneer.

Hitherto Major Grantly had never even spoken to Mr. Crawley. It may be remembered that the major was at the present moment one of the bailsmen for the due appearance of Mr. Crawley before the judge, and that he had been present when the magistrates sat at the inn in Silverbridge. He therefore knew the man's presence, but except on that occasion he had never even seen his intended future father-in-law. From the moment when he had first allowed himself to think of Grace, he had desired, yet almost feared, to make acquaintance with the father; but had been debarred from doing so by the peculiar position in which Mr. Crawley was placed. He had felt that it would be impossible to speak to the father of his affection for the daughter without any allusion to the coming trial; and he did not know how such allusion could be made. Thinking of this, he had at different times almost resolved not to call at Hogglestock till the trial should be over. Then he would go there, let the result of the trial have been what it might. But it had now become necessary for him to go on at once. His father had precipitated matters by his appeal to Grace. He would appeal to Grace's father, and reach Grace through his influence.

He drove over to Hogglestock, feeling himself to be anything but comfortable as he came near to the house. And when he did reach the spot he was somewhat disconcerted to find that another visitor was in the house before him. He presumed this to be the case, because there stood a little pony horse,—an animal which did not strongly recommend itself to his instructed eye,—attached by its rein to the palings. It was a poor humble-looking beast, whose knees had very lately become acquainted with the hard and sharp stones of a newly-mended highway. The blood was even now red upon the wounds.

"He'll never be much good again," said the major to his servant.

"That he won't sir," said the man. "But I don't think he's been very much good for some time back."

"I shouldn't like to have to ride him into Silverbridge," said the major, descending from the gig, and instructing his servant to move the horse and gig about as long as he might remain within the house. Then he walked across the little garden and knocked at the door. The door was immediately opened, and in the passage he found Mr. Crawley, and another clergyman whom the reader will recognize as Mr. Thumble. Mr. Thumble had come over to make arrangements as to the Sunday services and the parochial work, and had been very urgent in impressing on Mr. Crawley that the duties were to be left entirely to himself. Hence had come some bitter words, in which Mr. Crawley, though no doubt he said the sharper things of the two, had not been able to vanquish his enemy so completely as he had done on former occasions.

"There must be no interference, my dear sir,—none whatever, if you please," Mr. Thumble had said.

"There shall be none of which the bishop shall have reason to complain," Mr. Crawley had replied.

"There must be none at all, Mr. Crawley, if you please. It is only on that understanding that I have consented to take the parish temporarily into my hands. Mrs. Crawley, I hope that there may be no mistake about the schools. It must be exactly as though I were residing on the spot."

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, very irate at this appeal to his wife, and speaking in a loud voice, "do you misdoubt my word; or do you think that if I were minded to be false to you, that I should be corrected in my falsehood by the firmer faith of my wife?"

"I meant nothing about falsehood, Mr. Crawley."

"Having resigned this benefice for certain reasons of my own, with which I shall not trouble you, and acknowledging as I do,—and have done in writing under my hand to the bishop,—the propriety of his lordship's interference in providing for the services of the parish till my successor shall have been instituted, I shall, with what feelings of regret I need not say, leave you to the performance of your temporary duties."

"That is all that I require, Mr. Crawley."

"But it is wholly unnecessary that you should instruct me in mine."

"The bishop especially desires"—began Mr. Thumble. But Mr. Crawley interrupted him instantly.——

"If the bishop has directed you to give me such instruction, the bishop has been much in error. I will submit to receive none from him through you, sir. If you please, sir, let there be an end of it;" and

Mr. Crawley waved his hand. I hope that the reader will conceive the tone of Mr. Crawley's voice, and will appreciate the aspect of his face, and will see the motion of his hand, as he spoke these latter words. Mr. Thumble felt the power of the man so sensibly that he was unable to carry on the contest. Though Mr. Crawley was now but a broken reed, and was beneath his feet, yet Mr. Thumble acknowledged to himself that he could not hold his own in debate with this broken reed. But the words had been spoken, and the tone of the voice had died away, and the fire in the eyes had burned itself out before the moment of the major's arrival. Mr. Thumble was now returning to his horse, and having enjoyed,—if he did enjoy,—his little triumph about the parish, was becoming unhappy at the future dangers that awaited him. Perhaps he was the more unhappy because it had been proposed to him by authorities at the palace that he should repeatedly ride on the same animal from Barchester to Hogglestock and back. Mr. Crawley was in the act of replying to lamentations on this subject, with his hand on the latch, when the major arrived—"I regret to say, sir, that I cannot assist you by supplying any other steed." Then the major had knocked, and Mr. Crawley had at once opened the door.

"You probably do not remember me, Mr. Crawley?" said the major. "I am Major Grantly." Mrs. Crawley, who heard these words inside the room, sprang up from her chair, and could hardly resist the temptation to rush into the passage. She too had barely seen Major Grantly; and now the only bright gleam which appeared on her horizon depended on his constancy under circumstances which would have justified his inconstancy. But had he meant to be inconstant, surely he would never have come to Hogglestock!

"I remember you well, sir," said Mr. Crawley. "I am under no common obligation to you. You are at present one of my bailsmen."

"There's nothing in that," said the major.

Mr. Thumble, who had caught the name of Grantly, took off his hat, which he had put on his head. He had not been particular in keeping off his hat before Mr. Crawley. But he knew very well that Archdeacon Grantly was a big man in the diocese; and though the Grantlys and the Proudies were opposed to each other, still it might be well to take off his hat before any one who had to do with the big ones of the diocese. "I hope your respected father is well, sir?" said Mr. Thumble.

"Pretty well, I thank you." The major stood close up against the wall of the passage, so as to allow room for Mr. Thumble to pass out. His business was one on which he could hardly begin to speak until the other visitor should have gone. Mr. Crawley was standing with the

door wide open in his hand. He also was anxious to be rid of Mr. Thumble,—and was perhaps not so solicitous as a brother clergyman should have been touching the future fate of Mr. Thumble in the matter of the bishop's old cob.

"Really I don't know what to do as to getting upon him again," said Mr. Thumble.

"If you will allow him to progress slowly," said Mr. Crawley, "he will probably travel with the greater safety."

"I don't know what you call slow, Mr. Crawley. I was ever so much over two hours coming here from Barchester. He stumbled almost at every step."

"Did he fall while you were on him?" asked the major.

"Indeed he did, sir. You never saw such a thing, Major Grantly. Look here." Then Mr. Thumble, turning round, showed that the rear portion of his clothes had not escaped without injury.

"It was well he was not going fast, or you would have come on to your head," said Grantly.

"It was a mercy," said Thumble. "But, sir, as it was, I came to the ground with much violence. It was on Spigglewick Hill, where the road is covered with loose stones. I see, sir, you have a gig and horse here, with a servant. Perhaps, as the circumstances are so very peculiar,——" Then Mr. Thumble stopped, and looked up into the major's face with imploring eyes. But the major had no tenderness for such sufferings. "I'm sorry to say that I am going quite the other way," he said. "I am returning to Silverbridge."

Mr. Thumble hesitated, and then made a renewed request. "If you would not mind taking me to Silverbridge, I could get home from thence by railway; and perhaps you would allow your servant to take the horse to Barchester."

Major Grantly was for a moment dumfounded. "The request is most unreasonable, sir," said Mr. Crawley.

"That is as Major Grantly pleases to look at it," said Mr. Thumble.

"I am sorry to say that it is quite out of my power," said the major.

"You can surely walk, leading the beast, if you fear to mount him," said Mr. Crawley.

"I shall do as I please about that," said Mr. Thumble. "And, Mr. Crawley, if you will have the kindness to leave things in the parish just as they are,—just as they are, I will be obliged to you. It is the bishop's wish that you should touch nothing." Mr. Thumble was by this time on the step, and Mr. Crawley instantly slammed the door. "The gentleman is a clergyman from Barchester," said Mr. Crawley,

modestly folding his hands upon his breast, "whom the bishop has sent over here to take upon himself temporarily the services of the church, and, as it appears, the duties also of the parish. I refrain from animadverting upon his lordship's choice."

"And are you leaving Hogglestock?"

"When I have found a shelter for my wife and children I shall do so; nay, peradventure, I must do so before any such shelter can be found. I shall proceed in that matter as I am bid. I am one who can regard myself as no longer possessing the privilege of free action in anything. But while I have a room at your service, permit me to ask you to enter it." Then Mr. Crawley motioned him in with his hand, and Major Grantly found himself in the presence of Mrs. Crawley and her younger daughter.

He looked at them both for a moment, and could trace much of the lines of that face which he loved so well. But the troubles of life had almost robbed the elder lady of her beauty; and with the younger, the awkward thinness of the last years of feminine childhood had not yet given place to the fulfilment of feminine grace. But the likeness in each was quite enough to make him feel that he ought to be at home in that room. He thought that he could love the woman as his mother, and the girl as his sister. He found it very difficult to begin any conversation in their presence, and yet it seemed to be his duty to begin. Mr. Crawley had marshalled him into the room, and having done so, stood aside near the door. Mrs. Crawley had received him very graciously, and having done so, seemed to be ashamed of her own hospitality. Poor Jane had shrunk back into a distant corner, near the open standing desk at which she was accustomed to read Greek to her father, and, of course, could not be expected to speak. If Major Grantly could have found himself alone with any one of the three,—nay, if he could have been there with any two, he could have opened his budget at once; but, before all the family, he felt the difficulty of his situation. "Mrs. Crawley," said he, "I have been most anxious to make your acquaintance, and I trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in calling."

"I feel grateful to you, as I am sure does also my husband." So much she said, and then felt angry with herself for saying so much. Was she not expressing her strong hope that he might stand fast by her child, whereby the whole Crawley family would gain so much,—and the Grantly family lose much, in the same proportion?

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, "I owe you thanks, still unexpressed, in that you came forward, together with Mr. Robarts of Framley, to

satisfy the not unnatural requisition of the magistrates before whom I was called upon to appear in the early winter. I know not why any one should have ventured into such jeopardy on my account."

"There was no jeopardy, Mr. Crawley. Any one in the county would have done it."

"I know not that; nor can I see that there was no jeopardy. I trust that I may assure you that there is no danger;—none, I mean, to you. The danger to myself and those belonging to me is, alas, very urgent. The facts of my position are pressing close upon me. Methinks I suffer more from the visit of the gentleman who has just departed from me than from anything that has yet happened to me. And yet he is in his right;—he is altogether in his right."

"No, papa; he is not," said Jane, from her standing ground near the upright desk.

"My dear," said her father, "you should be silent on such a subject. It is a matter hard to be understood in all its bearings,—even by those who are most conversant with them. But as to this we need not trouble Major Grantly."

After that there was silence among them, and for a while it seemed as though there could be no approach to the subject on which Grantly had come thither to express himself. Mrs. Crawley, in her despair, said something about the weather; and the major, trying to draw near the special subject, became bold enough to remark "that he had had the pleasure of seeing Miss Crawley at Framley." "Mrs. Robarts has been very kind," said Mrs. Crawley, "very kind indeed. You can understand, Major Grantly, that this must be a very sad house for any young person." "I don't think it is at all sad," said Jane, still standing in the corner by the upright desk.

Then Major Grantly rose from his seat and walked across to the girl and took her hand. "You are so like your sister," said he. "Your sister is a great friend of mine. She has often spoken to me of you. I hope we shall be friends some day." But Jane could make no answer to this, though she had been able to vindicate the general character of the house while she was left in her corner by herself. "I wonder whether you would be angry with me," continued the major, "if I told you that I wanted to speak a word to your father and mother alone?" To this Jane made no reply, but was out of the room almost before the words had reached the ears of her father and mother. Though she was only sixteen, and had as yet read nothing but Latin and Greek,—unless we are to count the twelve books of Euclid and Wood's Algebra, and sundry smaller exercises of

the same description,—she understood, as well as any one then present, the reason why her absence was required.

As she closed the door the major paused for a moment, expecting, or perhaps hoping, that the father or the mother would say a word. But neither of them had a word to say. They sat silent, and as though conscience-stricken. Here was a rich man come, of whom they had heard that he might probably wish to wed their daughter. It was manifest enough to both of them that no man could marry into their family without subjecting himself to a heavy portion of that reproach and disgrace which was attached to them. But how was it possible that they should not care more for their daughter,—for their own flesh and blood, than for the incidental welfare of this rich man? As regarded the man himself they had heard everything that was good. Such a marriage was like the opening of paradise to their child. "Nil conscire sibi," said the father to himself, as he buckled on his armour for the fight.

When he had waited for a moment or two the major began. "Mrs. Crawley," he said, addressing himself to the mother, "I do not quite know how far you may be aware that I,—that I have for some time been,—been acquainted with your eldest daughter."

"I have heard from her that she is acquainted with you," said Mrs. Crawley, almost panting with anxiety.

"I may as well make a clean breast of it at once," said the major, smiling, "and say outright that I have come here to request your permission and her father's to ask her to be my wife." Then he was silent, and for a few moments neither Mr. nor Mrs. Crawley replied to him. She looked at her husband, and he gazed at the fire, and the smile died away from the major's face, as he watched the solemnity of them both. There was something almost forbidding in the peculiar gravity of Mr. Crawley's countenance when, as at present, something operated within him to cause him to express dissent from any proposition that was made to him. "I do not know how far this may be altogether new to you, Mrs. Crawley," said the major, waiting for a reply.

"It is not new to us," said Mrs. Crawley.

"May I hope, then, that you will not disapprove?"

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, "I am so placed by the untoward circumstances of my life that I can hardly claim to exercise over my own daughter that authority which should belong to a parent."

"My dear, do not say that," exclaimed Mrs. Crawley.

"But I do say it. Within three weeks of this time I may be a

prisoner, subject to the criminal laws of my country. At this moment I am without the power of earning bread for myself, or for my wife, or for my children. Major Grantly, you have even now seen the departure of the gentleman who has been sent here to take my place in this parish. I am, as it were, an outlaw here, and entitled neither to obedience nor respect from those who under other circumstances would be bound to give me both."

"Major Grantly," said the poor woman, "no husband or father in the county is more closely obeyed or more thoroughly respected and loved."

"I am sure of it," said the major.

"All this, however, matters nothing," continued Mr. Crawley, "and all speech on such homely matters would amount to an impertinence before you, sir, were it not that you have hinted at a purpose of connecting yourself at some future time with this unfortunate family."

"I meant to be plain-spoken, Mr. Crawley."

"I did not mean to insinuate, sir, that there was aught of reticence in your words, so contrived that you might fall back upon the vagueness of your expression for protection, should you hereafter see fit to change your purpose. I should have wronged you much by such a suggestion. I rather was minded to make known to you that I,—or, I should rather say, we," and Mr. Crawley pointed to his wife,— "shall not accept your plainness of speech as betokening aught beyond a conceived idea in furtherance of which you have thought it expedient to make certain inquiries."

"I don't quite follow you," said the major. "But what I want you to do is to give me your consent to visit your daughter; and I want Mrs. Crawley to write to Grace and tell her that it's all right." Mrs. Crawley was quite sure that it was all right, and was ready to sit down and write the letter that moment, if her husband would permit her to do so.

"I am sorry that I have not been explicit," said Mr. Crawley, "but I will endeavour to make myself more plainly intelligible. My daughter, sir, is so circumstanced in reference to her father, that I, as her father and as a gentleman, cannot encourage any man to make a tender to her of his hand."

"But I have made up my mind about all that."

"And I, sir, have made up mine. I dare not tell my girl that I think she will do well to place her hand in yours. A lady, when she does that, should feel at least that her hand is clean."

"It is the cleanest and the sweetest and the fairest hand in Barsetshire," said the major. Mrs. Crawley could not restrain herself, but running up to him, took his hand in hers and kissed it.

"There is unfortunately a stain, which is vicarial," began Mr. Crawley, sustaining up to that point his voice with Roman fortitude,—with a fortitude which would have been Roman had it not at that moment broken down under the pressure of human feeling. He could keep it up no longer, but continued his speech with broken sobs, and with a voice altogether changed in its tone,—rapid now, whereas it had before been slow,—natural, whereas it had hitherto been affected,—human, whereas it had hitherto been Roman. "Major Grantly," he said, "I am sore beset; but what can I say to you? My darling is as pure as the light of day,—only that she is soiled with my impurity. She is fit to grace the house of the best gentleman in England, had I not made her unfit."

"She shall grace mine," said the major. "By God, she shall!—to-morrow, if she'll have me." Mrs. Crawley, who was standing beside him, again raised his hand and kissed it.

"It may not be so. As I began by saying,—or rather strove to say, for I have been overtaken by weakness, and cannot speak my mind,—I cannot claim authority over my child as would another man. How can I exercise authority from between a prison's bars?"

"She would obey your slightest wish," said Mrs. Crawley.

"I could express no wish," said he. "But I know my girl, and I am sure that she will not consent to take infamy with her into the house of the man who loves her."

"There will be no infamy," said the major. "Infamy! I tell you that I shall be proud of the connexion."

"You, sir, are generous in your prosperity. We will strive to be at least just in our adversity. My wife and children are to be pitied,—because of the husband and the father."

"No!" said Mrs. Crawley. "I will not hear that said without denying it."

"But they must take their lot as it has been given to them," continued he. "Such a position in life as that which you have proposed to bestow upon my child would be to her, as regards human affairs, great elevation. And from what I have heard,—I may be permitted to add also from what I now learn by personal experience,—such a marriage would be laden with fair promise of future happiness. But if you ask my mind, I think that my child is not free to make it. You, sir, have many relatives, who are not in love, as you are, all of whom would be

affected by the stain of my disgrace. You have a daughter, to whom all your solicitude is due. No one should go to your house as your second wife who cannot feel that she will serve your child. My daughter would feel that she was bringing an injury upon the babe. I cannot bid her do this,—and I will not. Nor do I believe that she would do so if I bade her." Then he turned his chair round, and sat with his face to the wall, wiping away the tears with a tattered handkerchief.

Mrs. Crawley led the major away to the further window, and there stood looking up into his face. It need hardly be said that they also were crying. Whose eyes could have been dry after such a scene,—upon hearing such words? "You had better go," said Mrs. Crawley. "I know him so well. You had better go."

"Mrs. Crawley," he said, whispering to her, "if I ever desert her, may all that I love desert me! But you will help me?"

"You would want no help, were it not for this trouble."

"But you will help me?"

Then she paused a moment. "I can do nothing," she said, "but what he bids me."

"You will trust me, at any rate?" said the major.

"I do trust you," she replied. Then he went without saying a word further to Mr. Crawley. As soon as he was gone, the wife went over to her husband, and put her arm gently round his neck as he was sitting. For a while the husband took no notice of his wife's caress, but sat motionless, with his face still turned to the wall. Then she spoke to him a word or two, telling him that their visitor was gone. "My child!" he said. "My poor child! my darling! She has found grace in this man's sight; but even of that has her father robbed her! The Lord has visited upon the children the sins of the father, and will do so to the third and fourth generation."

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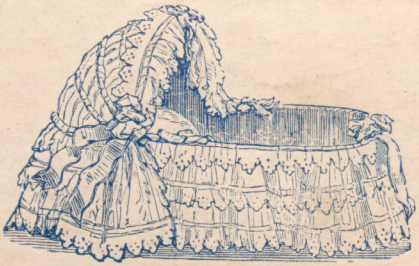

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